

Kentucky Commission on Women  
**Barren River ADD Regional Meeting**  
Bowling Green Technical College  
Hosted by Bowling Green Human Rights Commission and  
Networking Women of Bowling Green  
Bowling Green, Kentucky  
September 21, 2004

The meeting convened at 6:00PM with welcoming comments from Linda McCray, Executive Director, BG Human Rights Commission, Glenda Woods, Executive Director Ky. Commission on Women, and Gerry Gordon Brown, KCW Advisory Board member. Introductions of distinguished guests and committee chairs, with a brief overview of the project followed.

All participants dispersed to a committee of their choice at 6:40PM.

Total number participating: 25

Economic Self-Sufficiency

Facilitator: Ms. Regina Parsley Byrd

Obstacles to Economic Self- Sufficiency:

- Lack of education and awareness of “real world” expenses
- Limited exposure to positive female role models for young girls
- Low self-esteem (seems to be generational for some)
- Limited outreach of positive social organizations for young girls
- Limited social & political emphasis on female accomplishments

Solutions to Economic Self- Sufficiency:

- Formal training focusing on financial literacy for girls
- Creation of “Girls Only” courses that spotlight the “real world” in a gender specific way
- Programs that provide positive female role models in elementary school
- Assertiveness Training for Girls
- Community outreach and awareness of gender specific obstacles

## Leadership

Facilitator: Dr. Monica Burke

### The Problem:

“While it has been established that the economic and cultural barriers continue to make it difficult for women to achieve leadership positions, an increased effort for the availability of leadership and mentoring programs to help women overcome these barriers must be made. There is an urgent and strong need for programs that will target women and girls of all ages, income levels, and ethnic and racial backgrounds. There continues to be a sense of hopelessness for those women who are disenfranchised economically, especially women of color who are at the bottom of the power structure.”

### Recommendations:

- Elimination of social barriers that prevent women from obtaining leadership positions
- Implementation of mentoring programs- successful women helping other women who are economically disenfranchised
- Eliminate the disillusion that women are not bright or articulate
- Higher Education Institutions establish mentoring programs for women 20-30 years of age
- Improved communication regarding programs for women
- Location- Location- Location! – Provide these programs in areas where they are most needed
- Basic grassroots classes- how to interact within the political system
- All inclusive women organizations (Race, Religion, National Origin, Socioeconomic, etc)
- Gender sensitivity training
- Teaching civics to school age girls and women
- KCW should promote more public service announcements on television and media on equality of women
- Appropriation of resources towards the above recommendations

## Health & Well-Being

Facilitator: Donna Woods, RN

### Obstacles:

- Poverty (Generational in many instances)
- Lack of Education
- Pregnancy Bias by employers and society
- Inadequate and expensive health care coverage
- Stigma surrounding mental health problems
- “Sandwich generation” having responsibility of children and elderly parents
- Longevity- living longer, but not better

This group will meet again on October 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss recommendations and solutions.

## Education

Dr. Lou-Ann Crouther

Group participants felt that education was the key to all of the other four topics of discussion. From pre-school on up a strong educational foundation is required to combat centuries of disparate treatment of females of all ages.

### Recommendations:

The importance of mathematics and science should be stressed, and special programs to encourage girls in these areas of studies should be implemented statewide.

- Ready to Work Program – a partnership through KCTCS and Cabinet for Health & Family Services
- Adult Education Programs expansion
- KERA- Integrate practical living skills into academic curricula
- Multi-Cultural Education
- A statewide website for women & women’s issues

## Equity

Facilitator: Linda McCray

### Ten Obstacles:

1. Men
2. Lack of Education
3. Low expectations
4. Attitude
5. Societal Constraints
6. "Glass Ceiling"
7. Family Support (Too much or too little)
8. Prejudice
9. Traditional Constraints- not enough information about non traditional roles for women.
10. Pregnancy

### Solutions:

Challenge old attitudes about females regarding:

- education
- expectations
- efficiency
- Foster education and efficiency
- Improve recognition and reward system for female excellence
- Raise awareness of medical & educational statistics for women
- Early intervention of female potential
- Recruit females for higher education
- Feature successful women to provide inspiration
- Mentoring programs for girls to provide role-models
- Encourage females in their personal journey
- Encourage and educate about financial literacy and responsibility
- Multi-generational family education opportunities

### Comments:

The progress in these areas for women has been slow; however, changes have begun. Overall, most women felt that attitudes would have to change first, but recognized this would be the most difficult of all changes made. It was also agreed that equity issues must be addressed at a younger age. Female sexuality is a topic that also requires more education and attention by society and the medical profession.

Submitted by Committee Chair B.R.A.D.D. Area  
 Linda McCray  
 Executive Director  
 Bowling Green Human Rights Commission  
 10/5/04